

Dwight's Journal of Music.

WHOLE No. 924.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, SEPT. 16, 1876.

VOL. XXXVI. No. 12.

Rubinstein as Opera, Oratorio and Symphony Composer.

(From the German of A. W. AMBROS.)

(Concluded from Page 299.)

One should always, I think, judge an artist by the best he has accomplished, and not make this or that less successful, or unsuccessful work a matter of complaint. If we observe this rule regarding Rubinstein, his fame as an artist is secure.

It is worthy of high recognition that he, brought up as a virtuoso pianist, is not contented with the wreaths that fly toward him on all sides, but strives after the highest musical goals. And in this, instead of following in the footsteps of the great masters of the past through paths made smooth by them, he would fain bring us something new, entirely new, open new ways, discover new domains—and this we must reckon highly to his credit, whatever his success.

So too in Oratorio. Let us look more closely into his "Paradise Lost" (his second, the "Tower of Babel" being the first.) An Oratorio by a modern artist is an event, if only because it is an Oratorio. Mendelssohn with his two oratorios, of which the *St. Paul* particularly made a sensation on its appearance, had revived the taste and mood for this kind of composition; but the age is not peculiarly inclined to this whole class. Ferdinand Hiller's "Destruction of Jerusalem," an eminent work, full of musical beauties, and truly dazzling traits in parts, remained, in a most incomprehensible manner, almost unconsidered. The following oratorio by Hiller, "Saul," was a falling off from the first. The oratorios of Löwe ("Huss," "Lazarus," the "Seven Sleepers," etc.), were named by everybody with respect, and no one cared to hear them. When it came to great and worthy oratorio performances at German musical festivals, they were most fond of going back to Handel. For Kiesewetter after all is right in thinking, that by the side of these works nothing similar, even approximately, can be named. Yet there are treasures of that period not yet brought to light.

Rubinstein found himself moved to bespeak the composition of an oratorio text (by whom?) founded upon Milton's "Paradise Lost." That he thereby placed himself partly in competition with Haydn, need not have disturbed him; what Haydn brings before us in his *Creation*, has a radically different artistic tendency from that which Rubinstein follows in his *Verlorene Paradies*. Besides, he does not call his work an "Oratorio in three parts," but a "Sacred Opera in three acts." It is singular enough that the first German opera in Hamburg, with which the theatre there was brilliantly opened in 1678, treated of the same subject; it was entitled: "The Creation, Fall, and Redemption of Man," the text by the Imperial Poet Richter,

the music by Theile, the Ballet by Feuillade. So that there was something, and indeed very much about it to be seen, whereas with Rubinstein we must content ourselves with hearing. Where we are promised "Acts," we may expect acting, action, if only indicated in the verbal text. But in Rubinstein's oratorio or opera libretto, things seem peculiar. The turning point of the whole, the Fall through sin, does not come expressly before us; it is only depicted to us in tones (!) through the instrumental prelude of the third part or act; but the liveliest imagination, even had it inherited Heine's "tone-picture talent," will hardly be able to make out the apple tree, the serpent, and the "*Eritis sicut Deus*" from an alternation of counter-figurations and of strange fagotto accents. The poet (if he may be called so) does not even stand upon the vantage-ground, of having "a polished language poetize and think for him." * * * *

It is purely comical when Adam enters upon life with the words: "Who am I?! Where am I!?" (*Cogito, ergo sum*, occurred to one of the listeners). * * * *

* * * It is always a very serious matter for an Epos, not to say for a drama, when one has to do in it scarcely at all with human beings, but with mere Cherubim and Seraphim, with the devil and his grandmother, or (as in Wagner's *Rheingold*) with mere gods, giants, nixes, dwarfs. Milton helps himself as he can; he lets his demons shrink at need to the diminutive size of ants, or expand to gigantic bigness; he lets the angels fight battles—even with artillery—and more of the same sort. All this was unavailable for the librettist, and so there remained in the end nothing but forms devoid of physiognomy, or names: "Raphael, Michael, Gabriel," a "Voice," behind which modest incognito no less a person than the Lord God himself is hidden—and so on. To Haydn's *Creation* this is no objection, although the text of that is far from masterly. With Haydn the names Gabriel, Ariel, Raphael, signify no more than the superscriptions *Soprano solo*, *Tenore solo*, *Basso solo* would have signified. Whether the Soprano or the Tenor sings you versified meditations upon the refreshing greenness of the grass or the healing attributes of plants, is really all one; but it is quite another matter where we are supposed, as in the "Paradise Lost," to see in the bearers of the names the bearers of an action also, the persons of a drama. Suffice it to say—Rubinstein found the text satisfactory for his artistic ends, and he composed it. So nothing more remains for the rest of us but to see how he has composed it.

The resemblance between the head and face of Rubinstein and those of Beethoven has often been pointed out, and our lithographers do their part to draw our attention to it as strongly as possible. A mental resemblance would be, that Beethoven and Rubinstein both began

as pianoforte virtuosos, and with both the significant composer came speedily to light side by side with this virtuosity. But with Beethoven the composer so pressed the pianist into the back ground, that soon there was hardly any talk of the pianist; with Rubinstein the virtuoso grew higher and higher and over the composer's head. But few will fail to recognize, that among modern composers Rubinstein belongs to the group of the elect, in that he is more upright, more lofty, and entirely in earnest in the matter. Certain Trios, Sonatas, etc., of Rubinstein, his "Ocean Symphony," which we have already praised, and many other things, are pieces which represent their kind in a most highly respectable manner, and we shall always have to name their composer in the first rank among the musicians of our time. But it is equally true that one seldom carries home from one of his larger compositions a wholly pure and unblurred impression. That good advice of Goethe's, on his writing table and his drawing board: "If in the bad hour thou wilt rest, the good hour will be doubly blest," seems to have been less present to the mind of anybody in the world than to the mind of Rubinstein. When this *tête de bronze* has once got out the first page of a composition, on he writes until the last, whether the imagination is willing or not. Moments of the latter sort bring passages against the grain, forced and unedifying; but these at least are never flat and spiritless; and they would strike one less unpleasantly did there not stand close beside them beauties, sometimes beauties of the first rank.

In "Paradise Lost," too, what is good and excellent alternates with what is indifferent, and even with dreary moments. As a whole, the work makes a painfully fatiguing impression. Where lies the reason? We will attempt a general answer to the question. Music has its life, its efficacy above all through two elements: through sound, definitely stamped *motives*, which speak to sense and to imagination; and through their skillful, clearly intelligible, and artistically inspired development (*Durchführung*). By this last word is not meant a merely contrapuntal or technically correct working up, but one whereby the body of the composition builds itself up upon a fundamental motive, more or less clearly present or implied, analogous to the organic development of plants or animals, or as the Gothic architect constructs his mighty cathedral after a simple fundamental formula. Richness in fundamental *motives* is a gift of God, a matter of genius—scarcely ever has any one possessed it in a higher degree than Mozart and Franz Schubert. If we look around in our modern music, we find that we have a terrible deal of mind and astonishingly few ideas.* To be sure, it is still possible with this to write large works, whole operas (and not altogether bad ones), as for example

*The Italics are our's.—ED.

Max Bruch's "Loreley." Behind the modern nickname of "absolute melody," and the overweening regard for it expressed by Wagner and his satellites, there lurks after all only the old chagrin of Æsop's fox over the sour grapes, which he cannot get, because they hang too high for him. Where shall a real fund of fresh, new *motives*, then, be found!

The striving for immediate success, and shrinking from dry labor on the wooden school-bench, has nearly made an end to the other element of music, *good development*. But how much both are worth, our young geniuses may learn from many an old gentleman of the old school, like Franz Lachner. The "Geist" of to-day is like the rich uncle in the play, who has to pay all his nephew's debts in a round sum. We are in a certain sense again approaching the first beginnings of (our) music about the year 1600. From high æsthetic grounds the Florentines at that time threw overboard the whole rubbish of melody and counterpoint; and into the place of it stepped a kind of declamation most exactly conformed to the natural accent of each word and syllable.

For us the effect of this *stile recitativo* or *rap-presentativo* (as they called it) is that of a leaden tediousness. Out of this hollow, pathetic declamation the genial Monteverde and his pupil Cavalli created our Recitative and its formulas for exclamation, question, answer and conclusion. For nearly two centuries we have lived on it, and could live on it more than two centuries more; that too has become *rocco*; either the recitative is entirely banished; or it resolves itself into the "infinite (indefinite?) melody" of Wagner; or we come to hear recitatives, as in Rubinstein's "Paradise," which so weigh us down with heaviness that they might stand beside the recitatives of Anno 1600, and in their way are something remarkable, although by no means edifying.

In sacred music we have been accustomed to see an artistically well-motived use made of certain solemn forms of counterpoint. Do we not breathe more freely when, with Rubinstein, the concluding chorus of the second part suddenly sets out in the fugue style? But alas! we are soon sobered; for the clear, organic working up, which the old masters knew how to give to such movements, is out of the question with a modern. In the whole length and breadth of Rubinstein's "Paradise" it would be difficult to find half a dozen motives of really pronounced physiognomy; and in the place of an organic, sound development we have declamations, interesting, surprising successions of harmony, harp effects, trombone effects. Where we expect, nay demand, accents of passion, of feeling, of pain, of joy, etc., there is ever the same dreary, declamatory tone. If by any miracle the poet offers the composer such a moment,—for example, the last Duo between Adam and Eve—the composer lets it pass unused. Now he surprises you by something strikingly beautiful, and instantly you are travelling again through a melancholy waste, where no flower blooms, and no palm rustles. Who would not, upon hearing the first chorus of the heavenly ones, which sounds so extremely solemn, so mild and full of splendor, expect a musical work of the very first rank? Or what would he conclude about the

work, who should chance to hear the noble, fresh and graceful chorus: "How all is full of buds?"—How surprising is the genial description of Chaos (so wholly different from Haydn's); how surprising, too, the illustration of "Let there be light!" through the illuminating, unexpected six-four chord! We have become so very much accustomed to this famous moment with Haydn, that we are really astonished to see that the thing can be conceived otherwise.

In the second part (up to the moment of the creation of animals, where the composer's wings suddenly become lame) one beauty offers its hand to another; but from this praise we must except the infelicitous painting of the shrill locomotive whistle, which is intended to realize to us the height of the firmament. Satan with his blustering arias is not significantly painted; for the conflict of demons a mortal hardly would be hardly adequate—unless he were some Handel or Beethoven, whose storm passage in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony hits what would be about the right tone here. God should not sing at all, and certainly not in the Tenor. The way in which Mendelssohn has steered clear of this rock in "St. Paul," and which is perhaps the most ingenious feature in the whole work, was not applicable here; we hear more than too many choruses without that. But when the "Ancient of Days," whom the painters impersonate as a majestic old man with a long beard, suddenly begins to compete with Arnold von Melchthal and Raoul, we feel some slightly atheistic symptoms. In Oratorio this does not seem to be the final end and purpose of the work!

The Nibelungen Trilogy at Bayreuth.— Fuller Reports.

FIRST DAY.

(From a Letter of the Tribune's Correspondent.)

THE RHINE DAUGHTERS.—Wagner believed that the best possible subject for a musical drama is the popular legend or myth, because it leaves the poet and composer the greatest freedom in treatment, adapts itself naturally to dramatic purposes, and appeals at once to the emotional as distinguished from the intellectual nature of the spectator. Out of the old story of the Nibelungs, the race which dwelt in the bowels of the earth and wrought in metals, he has constructed the text of his great trilogy. It is the story of a magical ring made by the Nibelungs from the stolen treasure of the Rhine. Like the lust of gold, it brings a curse upon all who hold it. The gods obtain it from the Nibelungs by force and fraud, and the overthrow of their race is the consequence. They cannot undo the wrong themselves have done, but they raise up a mortal hero who of his own free will shall accomplish the reparation; and Siegfried accordingly, though he himself falls a victim to the curse, is the means of restoring the ring to the Rhine-daughters, its original possessors. Then the power of the gods passes away, and gives place to human free will and intelligence. The story is told in a prologue and three parts, each occupying an entire evening. It is the prologue, "Rheingold," which I shall now try to describe. The instrumental introduction depicted the restless movement of the deep river. It began away down in the lowest register of the contra bass-tuba, and flowed on, on, on, with the same simple chord of E flat, now rising, now falling, with increasing beauty and variety, till it changed rather abruptly into the graceful melody of the Rhine-daughters, and the curtain, drawn back to the sides, disclosed one of the most surprising scenes ever set forth in a theatre. We looked into the obscure depths of the Rhine. The stage to its whole height seemed to be filled with water. At the bottom were rugged rocks and dark caverns. Toward the top the waters were a little clearer, and a faint quivering light struggled through them from above. Seen

across the dark theatre with the wavy music coming up out of an invisible chasm between us and the river, like a wall of separation between reality and illusion, this far-away picture was like a vision. At first, in the dim and watery light, it was impossible to distinguish one shape from another. Little by little we became aware of graceful forms in flowing blue robes rising and sinking in the upper waters, gliding among the rocks with waving white arms, and calling to one another in a gentle and joyous melody. These were the three Rhine-daughters, guardians of the Rhine Gold. Nothing could be more charming than their frolic trio, embellished as it was by such wealth of instrumental illustration, such remarkable stage mechanism and poetical scenery. Here we saw at the very start the world-wide difference between the orchestra of Wagner with its freedom and eloquence of dramatic exarresion, and the "accompaniment" which sustains the voices in the old school of opera. Here indeed it may almost be said that individual performers in the band became as truly *dramatis personæ* as the actors on the stage. Soon the fluent character of this beautiful water music was disturbed by the introduction of a new theme, and in the increasing light we discerned the figure of Alberich, the Nibelung, groping among the rocks in the bed of the river. He pursued the Rhine daughters with amorous eagerness, and they swam above him, sinking sometimes almost to his grasp, but always eluding it, and jeering at him with mock tenderness and merry laughter. The Alberich of Carl Hill, and the Rhine daughters personated by Lilli and Marie Lehmann and Minna Lammert, were all admirable both in voice and action. To the distant spectator the mechanism by which the motions of swimming and floating were so aptly counterfeited was entirely incomprehensible, and the illusion was perfect. I believe the women rested on saddles supported by iron rods which their long drapery concealed. The motion was given from below. In the midst of the sport a bright light began to shine at the summit of the rocks, and suddenly, after a charming orchestral interlude, the glow of the gold broke forth from the point of a steep cliff, the horns giving out at the same moment a motive of great brilliancy and power. The music rapidly became more and more animated as the Rhine daughters greeted the apparition with joyous exclamations. They told Alberich of the wonderful power of this gold, which no one could obtain without renouncing forever the joys of love, and in the course of the dialogue two other motives, both to become important in the development of the drama, were successively introduced. The Nibelung pronounced a curse upon love, and with violent effort reached the summit and seized the gold. The light was quenched. We could just see Alberich throw himself headlong from the rock into the deep, while the Rhine daughters with a cry of dismay—a modification of their first cheerful melody, changed into the minor key—sank from sight, and darkness settled over the scene. Here, during the rehearsals, the waters disappeared, almost imperceptibly, as if swallowed up in thick clouds, but to-night a blunder of the machinists marred the effect. The orchestra continued the work of dramatic illustration in a long and beautiful passage, changing gradually to more heroic strains, and as the music changed so the clouds too grew thin, vanished, and left open before us a beautiful morning landscape.

WOTAN AND ALBERICH.—The foreground was a flowery field, supposed to represent a high table-land. A barrier of rock, overlooking the valley of the Rhine, bounded it in the rear, and in the distant background the gates and towers of Walhalla loomed indistinctly through the clouds. Wotan, the chief deity of the Norse mythology, slept on a grassy bank with his spouse Fricka by his side. The splendor of the morning came forth as the orchestra played the magnificent passage which symbolizes the stately castle of the gods, and recurs in the course of the trilogy as one of the principal leading motives. Fricka awoke Wotan from his dreams to look at this stronghold which the giants had built for him while he slept. In a superb dialogue she reminded him that the builders would soon come to claim their promised reward, which was nothing less than the possession of Freia, the goddess of youth; and here we heard one of the most imposing as well as important of all the leading motives in the work, the ponderous descending scale in the bass indicating the law which binds the gods by their pledged word. The proud dignity of the "All-Father," beautifully expressed in the rich bass of Franz Betz, contrasted finely with the agitation of his spouse and the alarm of Freia, who entered hastily a few moments later, and prayed for

help against her pursuers. Following close upon her delicious melody we heard in the orchestra the measured tramp of the giants, Fafner and Fasolt, and their ungainly figures were seen climbing up from the valley and crossing over the rocks. The rest of this brilliant scene almost baffles description, and certainly to convey by letter any idea of the richness, force and vividness of the music is quite out of the question. The giants insisted upon the terms of the bargain. The cries of Fricka and Freia, the threats of the brother gods Donner and Froh, the anger of Wotan, could not move them. Not daring to break his word, Wotan asked advice of Loge, the god of fire, and as this subtle character was introduced we heard the strains of the fire music so familiar to American audiences in connection with the finale of the "Walküre." Loge, in a melody of the most picturesque beauty, which called out an untimely but irresistible applause, declared that there was nothing the gods could offer the giants in exchange for Freia, except the ring forged by Alberich from the stolen treasure of the Rhine, thus formulating, so to speak, one of the chief ideas of the tragedy, which is the conflict between love and the lust of gold; and after a magnificent passage, in which the "ring melody" asserted a marked prominence, and each of the divinities in turn asked characteristic questions respecting the power of the gold, the giants agreed to wait until evening for a final answer, taking Freia meanwhile as security. Dragging after them the distressed goddess, Fafner and Fasolt, great hulking fellows, roughly clad and walking with big staves, climbed down the rocky descent and left the gods in melancholy thought. At once a gray mist settled upon the heights. The light faded. Everything began to wear an appearance of hoary age, for the gods had not tasted that day Freia's life-renewing apples. When they lamented their fading power Loge mocked at them, and at last Wotan agreed to accompany the fire-god to the abode of the dwarfs and take possession of the ring. This was the crime from which flowed all the misfortunes of the divine race and the tragedy of the drama. As Loge, followed by Wotan, disappeared in a chasm of the rocks, a thick vapor issued from the opening and gradually overspread the whole scene. The vapor changed to dense clouds. The music of the orchestra became more animated; the fire-motive recurred; a deep red glow began to suffuse the clouds, and as they slowly dissolved we heard the hammering of anvils, and then there lay before us the subterranean caverns of the Nibelungs, with a long vista of rock, at the extremity of which shone the gleam of forges. We saw Alberich beating his brother Mime, whom he had compelled to forge for him the tarn-helmet, gifted with the power of making the wearer invisible. He tried the helmet, and to the great terror of Mime vanished in a cloud, and then, during an orchestral interlude based upon the anvil melody, Wotan and Loge entered, coming down from above by an opening into the free air. Their scene with Mime was wonderful for its strong definitions of character, and the Mime of Carl Schloesser was enlivened by an amusing grotesqueness, particularly noticeable when in a rude rhythmic melody.

"Sorglose Schmiede,
Schufen wir sonst,"

with the anvil melody again in the accompaniment, he told Wotan and Loge of his once happy life and his sufferings under Alberich's blows. But if I undertook to describe all the incidents of this visit of the gods to Nibelheim I should soon exhaust your space if not your patience. Alberich was induced by the cunning Loge to exhibit the properties of the tarn-helmet. He disappeared, and in his place there was a hideous crawling creature. He disappeared again, and took the form of a toad. These two contrivances, I may remark, were the only common-place theatrical devices of the evening. Wotan set his foot upon the toad; Loge grasped it by the head, the helmet came away in his hands, and Alberich lay helpless on the ground. The gods bound him, and hurried him to the heights above. Cloud and mist covered the stage once more, as the orchestra, in an interlude so vivid that it might be called a musical panorama, led us back to the assemblage of the divinities. We passed again through the noise of the smithy, and we heard the heavy tread of climbing feet which had ushered in the giants in the second scene. At last we were shown the table land, still covered as before with a dull haze, and Wotan and Loge appeared with their prisoners. For his ransom Alberich caused the dwarfs to bring all the treasures of Nibelheim, and to these the gods forced him to add the helmet

and the ring. Thus stripped of all his power he was sent back to the lower world, but before he departed he laid upon the ring the terrible curse:

"Wie durch Fluch er mir geriet,
Verflucht sei dieser Ring,"

which, as an orchestral motive is to play so important a part in the music of the whole drama. As the giants approached with Freia, the mists broke away; the light of youth appeared again on the faces of the gods; only the towers of Walhalla in the background remained still veiled in clouds. But Wotan's purpose, while giving the giants the rest of the treasure, was to save the ring for himself, and hence when the payment came to be made he kept it on his finger. Fasolt and Fafner were to have as much gold and silver as, heaped up between their staves, would cover Freia from sight. The whole of Alberich's ransom except the ring was placed upon the pile; even the tarn-helmet was surrendered; still there was a crevice which the ring would just fill. Wotan refused to give it up. The giants in a rage were about to drag Freia away; the scene grew dark again; when from a cleft in the rocks on the right a bluish light appeared, and the figure of Erda, the universal and eternal mother, rose from the earth. She warned Wotan in solemn and mysterious strains of the misfortunes impending over Walhalla, and counselled him to avoid the fatal gold. The god stood for a moment in deep thought, and as he leaned upon his spear we heard the majestic motive which indicates the binding force of Wotan's word. The ring was given up. Joyous strains accompanied the liberation of Freia and the dispersal of the clouds. But Alberich's curse was not long in working its effect. The giants quarreled for the possession of the ring and Fafner killed Fasolt, put all the treasure into a sack, and took himself off.

Then came a finale which in picturesque effect and musical beauty surpassed all the great scenes which had gone before it. The gods were at last to take possession of their castle. Donner stood upon the summit of a high rock in the middle of the stage. Swinging his hammer, he collected the mists which still hung about the background, and a black thunder cloud enveloped him. Out of the darkness we heard his voice and the ominous roll of the heavenly artillery, till with a blow of his sledge he dispersed the clouds in a dazzling flash of lightning, and a rainbow stretched from the rock whereon he stood to the stronghold in the sky. A delicious melody succeeded the stormy passage in the orchestra, and the gods, gathering around the rock, prepared to cross to Walhalla by the rainbow bridge. The monologue of Wotan:

"Abendlich strahlt
Der Sonne Auge,"

before he led the way to the new abode, is one of the most elevated of all Wagner's conceptions, and as it was delivered by Betz, with such richness of illustration and startling harmonic devices in the orchestra, we felt that we had reached the climax of a great poem. The celestial procession ascended and moved slowly on. Suddenly we heard from the depths of the valley below the chorus of the Rhine daughters bewailing the lost ring, and with this fascinating music resounding in our ears, with the full splendor of the sun revealing for the first time the magnificence of Walhalla, and the refracting group of the gods advancing toward its shining gates, the curtain fell, and the first evening was at an end.

J. R. G. H.

SECOND DAY.

(From the Same.)

BAYREUTH, Aug. 14.

THE WALKÜRE.—An interval of many years is supposed to take place between the prologue which we saw last night and the action of the drama proper which began with "The Walküre" this afternoon. Wotan, in the meantime, to create a race of heroes (Volsungs), capable by the exercise of human free will of repairing the wrong done in the theft of the gold, had begot Siegmund and his twin sister Sieglinde of a mortal mother. Sieglinde, carried off in infancy by enemies, had been married against her will to Hunding. Wotan and Siegmund, clad in the skins of wolves, had become the terror of the forests. When the play begins, Siegmund, disarmed and separated from his father, is flying from his foes. A great deal of the music of this division of the trilogy has been heard in New York, so that the whole seems more or less familiar to us, and motives are constantly recurring which we have learned to understand and love. The orchestral in-

roduction was played by Theodore Thomas last Summer as a sort of prelude to the Love-song. Of course heard in that way it was impossible to grasp its true character, and indeed it must be said of all concert arrangements from this great work that though we are grateful for them, in defect of anything better, they give but the shadow of an idea of what the music really is. This introduction portrays a storm in the forest,—portrays it not only with immense power, but with an originality which, considering the abundance of good storm-music already in existence, is certainly surprising. We heard the voice of the thunder, the angry sweep of the wind, and the driving of the rain against the branches, and as the uproar began to die away the curtain rose. The scene was the interior of Hunding's abode, a hut built around the trunk of a huge ash tree which loomed up through the middle of the apartment. A fire burned upon a great stone hearth at one side. There were couches of skins and trophies of the chase, and other tokens of a rude warlike life picturesquely disposed in various parts of the cabin. Siegmund (Niemann) wounded and breathless staggered in at the door, and sank exhausted by the fire. To him from an inner chamber entered Sieglinde (Scheffky). She revived him and gave him drink. Brother and sister did not at that time know each other, and at any rate in the days of the Volsungs, people are supposed not to have been very particular about the niceties of relationship; nevertheless it was something of a shock to find them within a few minutes madly in love with each other, and there is no doubt that enjoyment of the music that followed was marred by the impossibility of sympathizing with the characters. Yet what could be more beautiful than this long love duet? It began with a graceful undulating motive, a little fragment of melody in two parts which returned again and again in the course of the drama. It gathered force and passion, and when Siegmund before putting the drinking-horn to his lips caused Sieglinde to touch it with hers, the two part motive changed to a delicious slow melody in the orchestra, which reminded me, not in its idea, but only in its general form, of some of the tenderest portions of "Lohengrin." The sweet intercourse of the lovers was interrupted by a strongly marked phrase in the orchestra which indicated (as Wagner tells us) that Hunding had come home and was putting his horse in the stable. Sure enough, Hunding (Niering) straightway appeared, looking very ugly and suspicious. He asked of the stranger the story of his adventures, and Siegmund told it in a comparatively simple and rhythmical song written in a style which Wagner uses sparingly, but always with great effect. There is a sample of it in the music of Mime in "The Rheingold," and we shall see two fine specimens to-morrow in "Siegfried."

With the aid of this style Wagner always succeeds in giving dramatic life to a mere narrative—a task in which the ordinary musician is almost sure to fail. When Siegmund spoke of his father in the course of this story we heard in the orchestra the majestic music with full, soft harmonies, which accompanied the appearance of Wotan and the towers of Walhalla in the second scene of "The Rheingold," and so we knew the secret of Siegmund's parentage. Hunding, however, recognized him only as an enemy of his clan, and he vowed revenge. Siegmund should have shelter for the night, but in the morning they must fight. As Siegmund, left alone by the dim light of the fire, lamented his desperate condition, without shield or sword, and in the house of his foe, Sieglinde returned, having given her husband a sleeping potion. She told her guest of a stranger who had once come to their hut, and driven into the trunk of the ash tree, up to the hilt, a sword which no man was able to pull out again, and as she spoke we heard again the Wotan music just referred to, as well as some of the music accompanying the entrance into Walhalla in the last scene of "The Rheingold," and we knew thereby who the stranger was. The love music now recurred with redoubled beauty, and rose to uncontrollable rapture. Suddenly wide doors at the back of the hut flew open. How shall I describe the surprising scene? Into the dark chamber poured the full glory of a ravishing Spring night. The woods beyond were flooded with the golden rays of the moon. And then began, very softly, Siegmund's famous love song:

"Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond,
In mildem Lichte leuchtet der Lenz,"

which we thought we knew at home, but found this afternoon a perfectly fresh thing. Without the setting the gem loses nearly all its brilliancy. With-

out the music and action that have led up to it, without the presence of the woman to whom it is addressed, the superb poetic picture set about it, and the associations which enable us to identify the varying motives in the orchestra with scenes that have gone before, the song is the mere pale and bloodless spectre of itself. Besides, it is a duet, not a solo. The monologue of Siegmund was answered in equally tender accents by his companion, and in alternation they carried on the amorous music to a climax not attainable in our imperfect arrangement for a single voice. Siegmund recognized the sword as the weapon which his father had promised him should be at hand in his sorest need. He named it *Nothung*, the invincible. With a wrench he drew it from the tree. He clasped Sieglinde in his arms, and to the most passionate and stirring of music the curtain fell upon an act the whole of which was like a prolonged delicate romance.

AFTER THE INTERMISSION.—There was an intermission here of a full hour. The lights were turned up, a large part of the audience left their seats and crowded the restaurants which stand on each side of the theatre, or else wandered about the terraced plateau and drank in the much-needed refreshment of pure air. A call blown on the trumpet brought them back to their places. A second blast a few minutes later was the signal to resume the performance. The people quickly settled in their places, and the play went on. The setting of the first stage picture was one of the most elegant of the whole evening. The scene represented a rocky place, across which stretched a great natural arch; through it led the descent to a long valley seen in distant perspective. Wotan stood in the foreground, with his spear and armor, and near at hand was his daughter and favorite Walkyrie, Brünnhilde (Frau Materna), the principal female character of the drama and doubtless the greatest of all Wagner's creations. She too was armed, wearing coat of mail over her long robes, and carrying shield and helmet. Wotan commanded her to make ready her horse and in the approaching fight between Siegmund and Hunding to give the victory to Siegmund. She hastened to obey, mounting from rock to rock with the wild and joyful "*Hojo-toho!*" which we hear so prominently in the Ride of the Walkyries. But Fricka here came to insist that Wotan should punish the lovers for their lawless passion. She appeared at the summit of the rocky arch in the background drawn by two rams in a little chariot. It did not seem to me that the rams added anything to the effect of the scene; indeed, though they were very good for artificial rams, the first impulse of the spectator was to laugh at them. Theatrical machinists and decorators produce some extraordinary illusions, but they have never yet succeeded in simulating life. The long dialogue in which Wotan and his spouse disputed over Siegmund's fate was another of those great dramatic scenes, full of fine discriminations, of forcible declamation, and of almost illimitable suggestiveness, which alone would point out Wagner as the greatest [?] of writers for the musical stage. The motive which indicates, in its heavy bass, the binding force of law even upon the gods, was given out in the orchestra, and as Wotan sadly yielded his will, we heard Brünnhilde's cry in the distance, and the Walkyrie appeared upon the ridge of the arch. She led her horse by the bridle,—a glossy black creature, with fine head and well-arched neck, clean limbs and shapely shoulders, who trod the boards as if he were on his native soil, and came down the winding path with ease and grace. Here at last was an animal an ornament to the stage. Brünnhilde knew that Wotan's heart was with Siegmund, and she tried long but in vain to make him adhere to his original decree, and allow Hunding to be slain. There was a striking tableau when, kneeling and resting her arms upon Wotan's knee, she looked up into his face while in a low and sad monologue he explained the necessity under which the gods were bound. It was almost a *recitativo parlante*, chiefly with a deep bass accompaniment, until the oft-repeated motive of the beginning of the second scene of "*The Rheingold*" grew out of the instrumental part, and the song then rose to greater animation. Brünnhilde, however, persevered in her intercession till Wotan angrily commanded her to obey. In the character of this war-maiden whose duty it is, with her eight sisters, to point out the heroes that are to fall in battle, and bring their souls to Walhalla, there is an element of human tenderness shown in the highly emotional music of this scene and developing afterward, in the third and fourth parts of the work, into the sublimity of passion. Even the most careless listener, however, must have been struck by the great

difference between the pure and lofty sentiment of the Walkyrie and the fiery spirit in the music of Siegmund and Sieglinde, who next came up from the valley flying together from Hunding's house. Their duet in this situation was marked by the greatest intensity of feeling, Sieglinde imagining that she heard the horn of her pursuing husband, until at last she fell exhausted in Siegmund's arms, and he laid her senseless on a bank. Brünnhilde then appeared to the hero destined for Walhalla. There was an exquisite dialogue in which she announced his fate, and replied to his questions as to the future state. When she told him that Sieglinde would not be with him there he drew his sword that they might both die together. Brünnhilde, moved by the spectacle of their love, promised to disobey her father and point out Hunding for death instead of Siegmund. Now the clouds began to settle over the rocks, the horn of Hunding was heard in the distance, and Siegmund running to meet him was lost to view in the mists. We heard the voices of the two men, and through occasional rifts in the clouds, by the light of vivid flashes which accompanied the stormy music of the orchestra, we saw them in conflict on the summit of the ridge. Then the form of Brünnhilde appeared in the sky, holding her shield over Siegmund. But suddenly on Hunding's side a red light broke forth and Wotan was seen extending his spear, against which Siegmund's sword was shattered and the hero fell.

THE WALKYRIES' RIDE.—Again there was an hour's rest, and we came to the famous third act, with much of which Americans are already somewhat acquainted. The introduction brought us to the well-known Walküren-Ritt, somewhat slower and less energetic than we are accustomed to hear it at home. When the curtain rose one of the sisters was seen looking out upon the clouded sky from the top of a high rock; three others were grouped around. They watched for the return of the rest of their number from battle-fields, and as often as one was seen in the distance, the watchers raised their weird cry, "*Hojo-toho.*" Then across the sky at the back, in a flash of lightning, passed the figure of a mounted Walkyrie, with the corpse of a warrior thrown across the saddle. The illusion, produced by a sort of magic lantern, was very well managed. Each Walkyrie as she arrived was supposed to leave her horse in a wood to the right, and came upon the stage in propria persona, to join the strange chorus. The last to come was Brünnhilde; she came not from battle, but fled from the wrath of her father, and she brought not the body of a hero, but the living Sieglinde, for whom she begged the protection of her sisters. The concerted passage in which the Walkyries interceded for Brünnhilde was a remarkable example of Wagner's ability in a kind of composition which he seldom employs, because his dramas seldom afford occasion for it. The interview between Wotan and Brünnhilde was so full of beauty that I hardly know how to describe it. The anger of the god was mingled with the sorrowful tenderness of the father, and the music of Brünnhilde was one long succession of the most superb and moving strains. In no previous part of the work had passion risen to such intensity and emotion found such sympathetic expression. The last scene, known in our concert-rooms as "*Wotan's Abschied*," took place in the twilight. The god pressed his daughter in a long embrace, and laid her to sleep under a spreading ash. He covered her face with her helm. He laid her long shield upon her breast. Then we heard the fire music—slower, I thought, than we have it at home—and all along the ridge of rocks across the middle of the stage the flames sprang up. The steam effect was used here with entire success, and as the red vapor curled upward to the roof it was difficult not to believe that the scene was really in flames. Now at least, if never before, did we realize how great a creation this wonderful finale is, and as the curtain fell there was a general outbreak of enthusiasm, with shouts and clapping of hands. The performance began at 20 minutes after 4 and ended at 10.

There were none of the disarrangements of the mechanism such as were noticed the first night. On the other hand there was a perceptible disarrangement in some of the voices. Wotan was evidently very much fatigued, and Fricka was not as good as before. Niemann I cannot like. His voice is worn and husky and his love-making is brutal. Like the others he suffers no doubt from the unparalleled labor of getting ready for this extraordinary performance. The singing of nearly all the artists was better at the dress rehearsals than it is now, and it was better yesterday than it is to-night. The Brünnhilde however was quite equal to the work

thrust upon her. Frau Materna, the favorite of the Vienna opera house, is a tall and stoutly-built woman, not too corpulent for her height, yet with an ungraceful fullness about the back and shoulders. She has a noble and pleasing face, prominent and regular features, black hair, expressive eyes, and a shapely hand and arm. Her voice is large, clear, and abundant; her intonation is pure; in point of culture she ranks with the very best artists of Germany, while in dramatic power, intelligence, and conscientiousness she has few superiors. She is indeed an exceptional artist. Most of the German singers—even the best—will not be at the trouble of saving their voices. However, the faults and merits of individual actors and actresses are of no moment in comparison with the greater questions involved in these representations.

J. R. G. H.

(From the New York Times).

..... There is no overture, in the common sense of the term, to "*Das Rheingold*," nor to any of the operas of the trilogy, but merely a brief prelude, imitative in "*Das Rheingold*" of rippling waters, and suggesting the accompaniment to the "*bathers' chorus*," as it is called, in the French score of "*Les Huguenots*." The curtain rises upon a submarine picture, showing the depths of the Rhine, a rock upon which lies the charmed gold being in the centre, and the river surrounding and covering it, and reaching to the top of the stage. The effect of the imitative music, added to that of the scene, was excellent, and the weird but tuneful strains allotted to the three Rhine daughters, as they swim about the rock and keep guard over the treasure, are exceedingly sweet and pretty. The scene with Alberich is only worth notice because of the measures of the *Rheinflüchter*, such as one seldom finds in Herr Wagner's writings, and the more welcome in that the voices are now and then allowed to mingle in dainty harmony. Alberich's music is characteristic enough, but it is not specially impressive, although certain bars accompanying and imitating the sliding of Alberich down the rocks as he pursues the fleeting maidens may be considered by Herr Wagner's admirers as very significant and dramatic. Later on is a fresh and bright *fanfare*, illustrative of the gold of the Rhine glistening in the first beams of the morning sun, and the greeting of the treasure by the water-maidens is also pleasant in its freshness and tunefulness. Alberich's curse of love is as vigorous as need be, but, although its theme recurs a hundred times during the progress of the opera, it can only be said to have the conventional meaning assigned to it. Alberich's flight with the treasure closes the scene.

After the clouds which have covered the stage disappear, a mountain top, with the new abode of the gods, the Walhalla, built by the giants and towering above, meets the eye. The grave and rich harmonies of the Walhalla-motive resound, and then comes a long duet between Wotan and Fricka, mere declamation, though containing some fluent and graceful measures. The entrance in succession of the several deities is marked by appropriate themes, the arrival of *Loge*, the fire-god, being heralded and his presence being accompanied throughout by chromatic progressions quite suggestive of the flickering element over which he has sway. But previous to *Loge's* arrival, the giant's *Fasolt* and *Fainer* have come, to a motive of appropriate roughness and heaviness, and they claim the goddess *Fricka* as the wages for their labor as builders of the Walhalla. *Loge's* words and music at this stage of events make up a wonderfully Mephistophelian sort of speech, but it is rather speech than music, and so is, in fact, the whole remainder of the scene, which concludes with the departure of Wotan and *Loge* for Nibelheim, where they intend to wrest Alberich's treasure from his grasp, and give it to the giants instead of *Fricka*.

Clouds of steam, the noise of which is duly imitated and swelled by the orchestra, ascend, and when they disperse, Nibelheim, the subterranean abode of the dwarfs, is disclosed. The motive illustrative of the clink of the dwarfs' hammers upon their anvils is decidedly suggestive as heard in these gloomy depths, and if all the themes were as pictorial, so to speak, as this one, many of Herr Wagner's intentions would be plainer. Unhappily, if I except a curious droning ditty sung by *Mime* in the scene, and a not infelicitous attempt to heighten by music the drollery of comic lamentations when *Mime* lies groaning on the ground, after being well thrashed by the invisible Alberich, there is nothing but what the Italians would term "*dry*" recitative until Nibelheim vanishes, the elation music accompanying Alberich's metamorphoses not being effective even in a purely imitative sense.

Alberich, having been caught by the cunning of *Loge*, is dragged upon earth, and Wotan and the fire-god are once more on the mountain-tops below the Walhalla. More imitative music, now illustrative of the loosening of cords, ensues as *Loge* unbinds Alberich, after he has been robbed of his gold and his ring; but from this point until a few bars before the end of the opera the ear does not seize one strain of perceptible beauty or expressive-

ness. The giants return and demand their pay. *Erla* warns *Wotan* against the plan, but the god finally parts with it, the gates at once quarreling over their booty, and *Fafner* slaying *Fasolt* on the spot. Now that *Freia* is to abide with the immortals, joy is restored to the dwellers on the mountain-tops. A brief *melodrama* of storm music follows, a vivid flash of lightning pierces the clouds, they scatter and a glorious rainbow-bridge spans the abyss between the mountain and the Walhalla. The Walhalla motive resounds anew, and then comes a delicious shimmering of high violin tones and tinkling of harps upon a broad and sonorous bass, as the gods cross the bridge and enter their abode—the song of the Rhine-daughters bewailing the loss of their treasure rising from below and mingling sadly with the triumphant themes on high. And here the curtain falls upon “Das Rheingold.”

The interest of last night's representation grew, in my judgment, rather out of the performance than out of the opera. The instrumentation of “Das Rheingold” is in truth superb, but all else is made subsidiary to it, and hence a feeling that the ear is cloyed after half an hour or so of close attention to the work of the band, which is by far the most important done in quantity and quality. Fortunately, the performance in respect of singers, comedians, and scenic traits had positive merits, so that the spectator had not to depend wholly upon the band for gratification. I must say at once, however, that the orchestra was magnificent. It numbered one hundred and twelve executants, with Herr Wilhelmj, the renowned violinist, as *chef d'attaque*, and Herr Richter of Vienna, as conductor, and, whether accompanying the voice or executing instrumental passages only, its precision, delicacy, and volume of tone were such as it has never been my privilege to listen to. On the stage the rendering of “Das Rheingold” was almost as faultless as in the orchestral chasm. Herr Betz, who personated *Wotan*, has a voice of rare force and compass and a commanding presence thoroughly in accord with the physical attributes of the majestic character he portrayed. All the voices, however, were good and fresh, while the method of song, of course, was diametrically opposed to the Italian method, the effect of the *bel canto* being sacrificed to that of power. The endless and difficult recitatives—particularly difficult as to intonation—were throughout rendered with exceeding earnestness and with unswerving respect as to the significance of the text, and where now and then a snatch of tune was discernible, as in *Mime's* scene in Nibelheim, the artists—and notably the representative of *Mime*, Herr Schlosser—took advantage of the opportunity immediately. *Fasolt* and *Fafner* were both portrayed with commendable ruggedness by Herren Eilers and Von Reichenberg, and Herr Hill was a capital *Alberich*. But the success of the night was for Herr Vogel who pictured *Loge*, and made the fire-god and the god of cunning at the same time a kind of companion-sketch to M. Faure's *Mephistopheles*. Craft and plausibility lurked in every movement of this artist, and his long “speeches”—for he can scarcely refer to them by any other name—were delivered with an easy eloquence which the difficulties of the music did not seem to hamper in the least. Once and once only during the evening did the audience break out in hearty plaudits, and this at the close of one of *Loge's* elaborate and witty addresses. The female rôles in “Das Rheingold” are of minor import. Fräulein Grün, who was *Fricka*, revealed the possession of an excellent voice, and the voice of Fräulein Haupt, as *Freia*, was scarcely inferior. The ladies chosen to play the *Rheingold* were of course selected for the parts on account of the freshness and clearness of their tones, and the effect of their voices, whether heard singly or in harmony, was delightful. As implied already, the music was sung with rigid regard to truthfulness of intonation and correctness of tempo; it is possible that once or twice the daughters of old Rhine strayed a trifle from absolute accuracy of tune, but the reproach can go no further.

As “Das Rheingold” is at least as much of a spectacle as an opera, it will be readily imagined that no little care was lavished upon its stage attire. This was of much splendor and massiveness, although I cannot admit that it effaced any of my recollections of what scenic artists and mechanics have achieved in Paris and London. The most novel picture was that presented at the outset of the even'g, when the bed of the Rhine is seen. Several thicknesses of gauze, upon which shadows such as are cast by the ripples above were thrown, were stretched between the spectator and the canvas, and the long dresses of the Rhine daughters concealed the iron frames in which the performers were incased, and in which they circled around a rock, with a sort of eccentric motion, while they moved their arms gracefully as they floated to and fro, singing. The set illustrative of the mountain tops, with the Walhalla beyond, was bright, but rather too fulcral in the details of the foreground, and, except when modified in tone by gauze cloud-pieces and colored light, somewhat gaudy. The view of the subterranean abode of the dwarfs was excellent, and a strong and highly realistic contrast was obtained by allowing the gray light of a distant outer world to pass through an aperture high up in the rocky ceiling, while on the other side of the cave all was red with the glare of the smithies. The changes of *Alberich*, who first becomes a snake and then a toad, were not at all skillfully managed; the illusion of the rainbow-bridge, in the subsequent scene, was, however, quite creditable to its designers, and, a strong light falling upon the many-colored side of the structure, its substantial framework was not observable.

F. A. S.

The Rameau Festival at Dijon.

The proceedings commenced, on the evening of the 11th August, with a sort of prologue in the guise of a grand musical procession, comprising all the local bands and the bands of the regiments stationed in the old Burgundian capital. The procession, headed by torches, traversed the principal streets, stopping to play at various points, such as the Port of the Canal de Bourgogne, the Place Saint-Jean, the Place Saint-Nicholas, the Place Darcy, and the Place Saint-Pierre. It performed also at the Hôtel de-Ville, in the Court of Honour, and

before Rameau's house, No. 7, Rue Vaillant, in front of which was the composer's bust between two flags, the whole surrounded by a setting of velvet, through which ran a wreath of laurel. A commemorative tablet bears the following inscription:—

“Here was born, on the 23rd October, 1683. JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU. Died, at Paris, the 12th September, 1764.”

On Saturday, the 12th, the programme commenced at the Cathedral with a solemn mass, performed by the Philharmonic Society and the Choral Society (both of Dijon), assisted by the *Maîtrise* of the Cathedral and the pupils of the Communal Schools. Notwithstanding his great talent as an organist and composer of sacred music, Rameau has left no mass; consequently a mass in B flat minor, by Dietrich, another Dijon composer, was selected. It produced an admirable effect, especially the “Gloria.” M. Arthur Deroeye conducted the performance. Two hours later the statue of Rameau was solemnly inaugurated in the old Place du Théâtre. It is in bronze, and is the production of M. Eugène Guillaume, a member of the Institute and Director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and who, having been born at Montbard, near Dijon, may be almost considered a fellow-townsmen of the composer. The latter is represented at about fifty years of age. He is in a standing posture, clad very simply, and with his neck bare. At his feet lies a violin. His right hand rests upon the keyboard of a harpsichord, while the other grasps a manuscript and a pencil. His eye is gazing intently into space, as though he were under the influence of inspiration. The statue was much admired, but there was a generally expressed opinion that the pedestal is too lofty. This, however, is a defect that can easily be remedied. Two very interesting speeches were delivered, one by M. Enfert, the Mayor of Dijon, and the other by M. Charles Poissot, chairman of the Festival Committee. In the evening, at the Grand-Théâtre, there was a performance exclusively of works or portions of works by Rameau. The programme included: Part One—(1) Overture to *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*, the Philharmonic Society; (2) Air from *Dardanus*, M. Carroul; (3) “Les Niais de Sologne” and “Les Cyclopes,” pieces for the harpsichord, M. Saint-Saëns; (4) Air from *Castor et Pollux*, Mdlle. Jung; (5) Trios, MM. Saint-Saëns, Taffanel, and Reucksel; (6) Air from *Dardanus*, M. Jourdan; (7) Air from *Hippolyte et Aricie*, with flute accompaniment, Mdlle. Seveste and M. Taffanel; (8) a short lecture on Rameau, by M. Emile Marck, of the Paris Odéon. Part Two—(1) “Trio of the Fates,” MM. Jourdan, Carroul, and Dieu; (2) Air from *Castor*, Mdlle. Jung; (3) Air from *Castor*, M. Carroul; (4) Minuet from *Castor*, Mdlle. Seveste; (5) Air for the flute, M. Taffanel; (6) Air from *Castor*, M. Dieu; (7) Duet from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*, Mdlles. Seveste and Jung; (8) Chorus from *Dardanus*, Choral Society. Part Three—Ballet adapted to the principal airs composed by Rameau, and executed by Ladies from the Scala, Milan; (1) Entrance march; (2) Sarabande; (3) Rigaudon; (4) Scena; (5) Gavotte; (6) Passepied; (7) Scena; (8) Forlane; and (9) Tambourin. The airs were selected by M. Théodore de Lajarte, and the selection reflected great credit upon that gentleman's taste.

On Sunday, the 13th, there was a grand international competition of “Orphéons,” Reed Bands, and Fanfares. The jury, comprising artists of Paris and Dijon, was under the presidency of Baron Taylor. The ceremony of distributing the prizes took place in the principal courtyard of the Mairie, and was followed by a grand official banquet, in the course of which Baron Taylor made a most brilliant speech. During the banquet the town was magnificently illuminated; a concert was given in the Bois du Parc by some of the Societies which had competed in the afternoon; and at the Grand-Théâtre there was a performance by MM. Proudhon, Coquelin, junr., Mesdames Provost-Pousin and Bianca, of the Comédie-Française. On Monday, the 14th, there was a grand military “Carrousel,” or tournament, got up by the officers and non-commissioned officers of the 10th Regiment of Dragoons and of the 18th Regiment of Chasseurs à Cheval. More than twelve thousand spectators were present. In the evening there was a grand concert, under the direction of M. Achard, Director of the Dijon Conservatory of Music. The performers were the professors of that establishment, assisted by artists from Paris and elsewhere. Among the items of the programme was an “Ode to Rameau,” written by a native of Dijon, M. Stop, the well-known draughtsman, and impressively recited by M. Frédéric Achard, all the artists advancing successively to crown with laurel the composer's bust. The Festival wound up on Tues-

day, the 15th, with a concert given in the morning by the Bon Marché Musical Society; a concert given in the evening by a mixed orchestra of military and civilian bands; a general illumination of the town; and a grand military tattoo by torchlight.

Such were the principal features of a Festival which may be justly termed national, for the whole of France was almost as deeply interested as Dijon in paying this tribute of homage to the famous Burgundian musician. But, while people are congratulating each other upon the success with which everything went off, it may be as well to state that, had it not been for the disinterested, zealous, and untiring efforts of one man, Dijon would have had no Festival, and Rameau no statue. That the Festival has been held and the statue erected is due entirely to M. Charles Poissot, who for fifteen long years, through good report and evil report, has labored lovingly and incessantly to bring about a consummation so devoutly to be wished. All honor to M. Charles Poissot!

—London Musical World.

The Shape of the Ear.

(To the Editor of the London “Musical World.”)

SIR,—A recent cursory description of the well-known Mozartium, from the pen of an intelligent correspondent in a daily paper, mentions the fact that, amongst the interesting relics of the “divine” composer exhibited to the public gaze at Salzburg, is a drawing of his ear “showing an abnormally large ‘bell,’ as though nature intended him to be a gifted listener.” It is noteworthy that in all portraits, except those painted by the sun itself, next to the boots, the ear seems to present to the painter the greatest difficulty. It is rarely one sees a shoe beautifully drawn; perhaps it is still rarer that the ordinary covering for the foot presents anything that can be made beautiful, even by a skilful draftsman. With the ear the observer cannot help remarking the same absence of individuality. Anything will do for an ear; and a daub or two, that would with equal propriety, represent a dried fig, or an early oyster, would do duty for the above organ. In calling attention to this matter, I trust the question of the “shape of the ear,” as bearing upon capacity of various kinds, will receive some attention from those who may have to select candidates for instruction in music, or to impart guidance to the musical student. In no art is taste so capricious as in music. As to the Beautiful in poetry or painting, there will be little difficulty in setting up universally acknowledged standards of excellence. But, alas, in music, such is not the case! Discords that to some are simply hideous, are to others honeyed sweetness. What is an opiate to the one sets the other dancing. “One man's meat,” to use an old adage, “is another man's poison.” Minds are not alike, nor are any two interior ears alike. This part of the subject is beyond human research at present; but unquestionably there is a very important branch of this knowledge that is directly within the scope of scientific research. Nay, more, it lies immediately under the eye of everyone, and may be instantly observed, and turned to practical account by everyone who chooses to make use of his faculties. This is a careful and comparative survey of the shape of the exterior human ear. With the view of stimulating research in this direction, I beg to call the attention of musical people, and others interested, to the subject. The “infinite variety” of shape in ears will immediately strike them as amply sufficient to account for preference being given either to “Tommy, make room for your uncle” or *Lohengrin*. Just as in the eye there may be color-blindness, so in the ear there is melody, or harmony, deafness. Many possess eyes that do not see identically; so do many possess ears that do not hear identically. One eye sees a little askant of the other; precisely so with the ear. “First pull the mote out of thine own eye” might most justly be supplemented with the kindred exclamation, “First remove the obstruction from thine own ear, and then shalt thou hear clearly what gratifies or annoys, as the case may be, thy brother's ear.” If a man have a defective eye, he would not be likely to win the prize in a rifle contest; so, with an imperfect ear, there must necessarily be a faulty musician. The hidden causes of perfection may be numerous and profound; yet some causes that prevent perfection being attained, or even hoped for, are patent to everyone. A few of the results of my own observations I venture humbly to submit, in the trust that something more may be elicited on this, as I believe, most interesting question. And I shall be extremely glad if any person who is of opinion that my con-

clusions are premature or erratic will kindly contribute the result of his or her individual experience. Small ears are invariably under great disadvantage. Large ears are usually indicative of a more comprehensive taste. A narrow "harp"—or harp-like opening—always denotes a good ear for music. If the harp is very regular, you may safely prognosticate a correct intonation. For a singer the rim must be very even and the circle unbroken. Any protuberance on the rim of the ear will occasion a slight discrepancy of intonation—the singer will not be at all times alike. Some have a double harp; this is dangerous to the success of the singer. A perfect double rim is, on the other hand, highly advantageous; this is, however, open to the weakness of being easily satisfied with sweet sounds of any kind. The ear with no rim is the most dainty and difficult to please; it appears to receive, almost as it were by selection, only the best sounds—ordinary sounds have no attraction for it. These are a few of the leading features of the ear. Seeing that we have casts of pianists' hands, would it not be as instructive to have casts of composer's ears? Surely the one is as important to the musical student as the other.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE TOLHURST.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, SEPT. 16, 1876.

The First Bayreuthiad.

"Perhaps, since the whole affair is intended for a regeneration of the Olympic Games, we shall count time in future by Bayreuthiads, as the Greeks did by Olympiads: 'In the third year of the twelfth Bayreuthiad it came to pass, that' etc., etc.

A. W. Ambros, 1872.

Bayreuth and the Nibelungen Trilogy still occupy perforce the greater part of all our space. It is a thing which it costs so many words simply to tell of and describe! And when it comes to the criticisms, to the discussion of the Wagner theories, and the subtle metaphysical and mystical, and even theological (!) expositions and interpretations with which the Wagnerites beset us on all sides,—it would require a whole room in our Public Library to hold them. Fortunately there are no musical events to chronicle at home of late, nor much else of any consequence in Europe; the Musician of the Future has been suffered to monopolize the whole field, and he has virtually had the world for audience, though most of us poor stay-at-homes were only present there vicariously.

We do our best to place our readers on a level with the fortunate ones (or the unfortunate, as the case may be) who sat before the wondrous magic lantern in that novel theatre. With this view we copy to-day a large part of the very graphic description of the first two performances by the *Tribune* correspondent, who in a literary point of view at least writes admirably, and brings the mystical strange plot, the very scenes, intelligibly and vividly before the mind. In what he says of the music, we must bear in mind that he went there a thoroughly committed Wagnerite beforehand, and it is quite natural that he should find everything, without exception, "exquisite," "sublime," "grand," unsurpassed in pathos, etc., and that he should speak of Wagner as "this unapproached master of the orchestra." We do not adduce these letters as musical criticism, but simply as helping us to form an idea of what actually took place in Bayreuth, making us imagine ourselves part and parcel of that audience, sharing its transports, if we are that way predisposed. Some others paint the thing in far less glowing colors; of course the bored, the disappointed, will be heard from last. We also give the first of the letters in the *New York Times*, which may be useful for comparison; and we intend to give more both from these and other sources.

The real criticism, as we have said, will come later. Already it begins to come in dribbles. All

that we do get, not only from the letters and the criticisms which have as yet come from Bayreuth, but from our careful reading of Wagner's four librettos, with more or less dipping into the piano arrangements of the scores, only confirms our own conviction as heretofore expressed in these columns many times; namely: 1. that, whatever the success of the Trilogy, in its influence upon the "Art-work of the Future" it can only stand as something *sui generis*, one thing among others, and that it will not in the least impair the charm or the validity of older forms of musical Art, created and developed by the long line of great masters; nor will Opera, in its best instances, cease to warm the heart and the imagination just as much as ever, because this formidable shape of melodramatic Drama with elaborate or choral accompaniment or background has been set up beside it.

2. That it is not "development," not the logical outgrowth of the whole history of music, as it has been claimed, but it is revolution; it tends to overturn established principles of Art, to paralyze its finest forces, and pull down the glorious fabric which its inspired master architects have been for ages building up. In short, it is reversing the wheels of time; it is going back to the first beginnings of Opera in 1600, when the attempt was made by scholars of the Renaissance in Florence to reproduce the old Greek Drama, chanting the words in dry and endless recitative. Go back to the meagre Italian Opera of that day, and you find Opera without arias, or chorus, or concerted music, opera in which the music is wholly secondary to the words, and, with the exception of the modern orchestra, why not almost entirely in accordance with the new Wagnerian idea?

3. That, placing music in so subordinate a position, whatever importance it may succeed in acquiring for itself as a thing *sui generis*, it can only concern the genuine music-lover, as such, in a limited degree; it may form one of the curious side dishes in a rich life-long musical experience.

4. That this music, by the very nature of its peculiar structure, lacks entirely that prime, essential quality of all true Art, *repose*; which is almost the same thing as saying it lacks *beauty*.

5. That it is all the more fatiguing and monotonous for the reason that the action may not pause for any "indulgence," as Wagner would say, in an Aria, a Duet, Trio, or ensemble. It recklessly, in wilful slavery to system, renounces the *charm* of these *natural* forms of music. Where music is free to follow out its own spontaneous inspiration and expression, it is pretty sure to take these forms; and the Melody, the Aria is as much an expression, a revelation of character and feeling, and even more so, than the words of the text chanted or recited in musical tones. This again is only saying in another way that the music lacks repose.—Just so, too, natural charm, repose, are forfeited by the disregard of easy modulation; the continual spasmodic breaking away from one key into another wholly unrelated; the contempt for the "family tie" in harmonies; and just so, also, by the absence of anything like *thematic development*, for the recurring characteristic "motives" in the orchestra are simply so many labels attached to the several persons and things to be remembered in the plot,—a very different thing from a thematic germ developing itself according to the intrinsic laws of music.

6. That the legendary subject matter of the drama, the strange medley of gods, giants, monsters, heroes and incestuous lovers,—while we admit that there is much power and true poetic faculty evinced in many parts of the four librettos—is, save as material for picturesque and brilliant spectacle, essentially bewildering and tedious; and that

music comes only into a very forced connection with much of its protracted dialogue, which is more interesting and intelligible when merely read, than it can be when sung or musically recited. Take for instance the long curtain lecture between Wotan and his Juno (Fricka), the one defending, the other rebuking the violation of the marriage oath and the bridal union of brother and sister; or the long monologue (26 pages of music) in which Wotan, in shame and anguish, pours the whole scandalous story into the pure ears of his daughter Brünnhilde;—can anything in the shape of music be more dreary than this scene!

—But we cannot enter into all these points of criticism now. Our present object merely is to mention a few points, and show how far they are confirmed by the more thoughtful criticism which begins to come to us from Bayreuth. From the glowing reports of the wholesale admirers, which naturally came first, we appeal to these; from Philip drunk to Philip sober. Already, in the first letter of the *New York Times*, which we have copied, we have something more discriminating in regard to the *Rheingold* music. We still wait for copies of the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, which contain the letters of Dr. Hanslick, the foremost musical critic now in Germany. Meanwhile we are indebted to the *New Yorker Democrat* for his concluding summary, which we translate:—

"Upon Art-historical predictions the critic enters as unwillingly as earnest astronomers upon weather prophecies. Yet so much seems to us extremely probable: that the style of Wagner's *Nibelungen* will not be the music of the future, but at the most one of many styles. Perhaps too only a fermenting yeast for new developments reaching backward to the old. For Wagner's latest reform consists not in an enrichment, an expansion, a renovation inside of music, in the sense that the Art of Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schumann, has been; on the contrary it is a turning and twisting round of the primeval laws of music, a style against the nature of human hearing and feeling. One may say of these compositions: they have music, yet they are no music. To point out one thing for the provisional orienting of the reader: Through four evenings we hear people singing on the stage, without any self-sustained and clearly stamped melody, without a single duet, terzet, ensemble piece, without chorus or finale! This alone proves already, that the knife is laid not to outlived forms, but to the living root of dramatic music. Friends of Opera, who are not acquainted with *Tristan* and the *Nibelungen-Ring*, are very apt to suspect the adversaries of this later progeny of Wagner of being enemies of Wagner altogether. They think always of the *Fliegende Holländer* or *Tannhäuser*, which are fundamentally as different from Wagner's newest music, as two things can be in the same art. One can consider *Tannhäuser* one of the most beautiful of operas, and in spite of that regard the *Nibelungen* as the very opposite; in fact he must do so. For what made and still makes the success of Wagner's earlier operas, is the constant union of the descriptive, the specifically dramatic element with the charm of comprehensible melody, the alternation of dialogue with musically conceived and musically formed ensembles, choruses, finales. All that can remind one of these excellencies has Wagner in his *Nibelungen* banished till no trace remains.

"In fact, Wagner's *Nibelungen-Ring* is something wholly new, fundamentally different from all that went before, an unique thing standing for itself alone. There are three main points which in principle distinguish this music from all preceding operas, including Wagner's own. First, the want of independent, rounded vocal melodies, into the place

of which steps a sort of exalted recitation, with the 'infinite melody' in the orchestra as a basis. Secondly, the dissolution of every sort of form, not merely the traditional forms (Aria, Duet, etc.), but of symmetry itself, of all musical logic developing itself according to laws. Finally, in the third place, the exclusion of vocal pieces in several parts, duets, terzets, choruses, finales, with the exception of a few fleeting small attempts.

"Now to remove vocal part-song, duets, trios, choruses, from the Opera, on the plea that they are 'undramatic,' is to ignore the most valuable achievement of musical art and go back two centuries to children's shoes.* It is the finest possession, the most peculiar charm of music, its greatest advantage over the drama, that it can let two or more persons, and whole crowds of people, express themselves at once. This treasure, for which the poet must envy the musician, as Schiller felt so deeply in the composition of his *Bride of Messina*, Wagner has thrown out of the window as superfluous. In the *Nibelungen-Ring* two, or three, or six persons may stand beside each other on the stage, yet never do any two of them (with a few momentary slight exceptions) sing at once; always it is one after the other, as in a court of law. What torture it is to follow this single-file singing geese march the whole evening, he only knows who has himself experienced it. But when Wagner through four evenings, one after another, protracts the tyranny of this monodical style, he almost suicidally obliges us to see the absurdity of his method and to yearn for the much despised old Opera once more. All this is aggravated by the unexampled length to which single scenes and conversations are stretched out."

The *Ménestrel* of Paris had a critic present ("un musicien aussi compétent qu'impartial") who with a great deal of admiration mingles such sentences as these:

"Charming commencements of phrases in all that act; but the gate of heaven, hardly opened, shuts immediately!"—"Without its third act, the *Götterdämmerung* was a disaster. You cannot form an idea of the profound ennui which those two first acts brought over the public. It is perhaps for this reason that the partisans *quand même* of Richard Wagner proclaim the *Götterdämmerung* the chef-d'œuvre of the tetralogy. For our part, having not the faith that saves, we will pass over, if you please, these two interminable deserts of music, and come at once to the third act."—"And now what are we to conclude? Must we say with Wagner, that the Germans have at last an Art? . . . Let Mozart, Weber, Beethoven reply."

Another Frenchman (M. Albert Wolf, we presume), in *Figaro*, says there are two men in Wagner, the lunatic and the inspired, and pronounces the operas as a whole "the dream of a lunatic who thinks to impose upon the world a most frightful sort of art." We copy from the *Transcript*:

The substance of the judgment against the Wagner experiment is this—that there are passages of unapproached and inconceivable elevation, [?] when the spectator is exalted and carried away by an indescribable enthusiasm. But the long endurance of the "continuous melody"—that is, the music without rhythmic form, which is, however, Wagner's one peculiar contribution to art—is too great a price, they say, to pay for these moments of exaltation. This amounts to saying that the very thing on which Wagner particularly bases his claim of a great achievement is just what spoils his work. "This music of the future," says the *Figaro* writer, "with the exception of a few passages, is doomed to certain forgetfulness," and furthermore "that part of the work which cannot be strictly called the music of the future is alone really good." The music of the future that accompanies and illustrates the majestic declaration of the god Wotan and which that faithful Wagnerite, the accomplished critic of the New York Tribune,

* Chinese shoes, which compress the foot and allow no development!—(Ed.)

found so impressive, this disgusted Parisian critic describes thus: "Wotan comes in during the second act to get off a piece which, watch in hand, lasted for twenty-five minutes; not a situation, not a phrase, nothing but a horrible cacophony which lasted for one hour and a half, one of the most overpowering acts that was ever heard in any theatre. The Lunatic gets the better of the Inspired."

An Italian critic, in *Aamodeo*, of Milan, finds much to praise, yet writes: "One of the most serious calamities is the absolute want of chorus; and the other, that never are the voices united, with the exception of the short *terzettino* of the nymphs in their hymn to the Rhine gold. This want of union in the voices is felt particularly when there are a dozen persons on the stage. This is very hurtful to variety, and generates continual weariness of such excessive monotony, while in the orchestra noise (*strepitosi*) *ripieni* so abound as to generate confusion and nothing else." He speaks also of "recitatives interminable, heavy and most irksome."

Mr. Joseph Bennett, one of the critics whose full report upon the festival, in the *London Musical Times*, we shall be tempted to lay before our readers hereafter, writes:

The question, of course, arises—and a most important one it is—whether a drama for music should so rigidly consult its own separate necessities, and yield nothing to the conditions of its alliance. My own answer given deliberately after the experience of Bayreuth, is in the negative. It is true that Wagner has so far recognized the demands of music as to identify each scene with some distinct emotion, powerfully expressed; but even this is not enough to save his theory from rejection. In every drama so constructed there must be passages with which music has nothing to do, and the effect of which music, especially when written on the principles hereafter mentioned, simply mars. But the question underlying all is whether Wagner has not hit upon a fallacy in supposing that he can, from a practical point of view, subordinate music to drama. In theory, his system appears perfect; in reality, I doubt whether it will ever work. The way to test this is for the audience at Bayreuth to ask themselves what part of the compound thing there presented engaged most of their attention. Wagner, as the official mouthpiece of his system, would urge that the mind should have been sensible of nothing but a whole; but that was impossible. The three grand elements—music, poetry and stage representation—stood separately before every eye, and there can be no doubt as to which was most earnestly regarded; which was most discussed, which contributed before the others to the judgment pronounced. The predominance of music in all these respects might have been foreseen, and was, in fact, inevitable. Associate music and poetry on equal terms you cannot. The more universal, emotional and powerful art will prevail; and not all the force of twenty Wagners can alter the fact. Wherefore, I contend, that to write a drama with a view to dramatic exigencies alone, and then to ally it with music, must not only result in failure, but is contrary to the very nature of things.

And on the question of the human interest, as well as of the elevation of the poem and the plot he says too truly:

Looking at this wonder-story, with its array of gods, demons, giants, dragons, miraculous gauds, potent drinks, and what not that ever entered into the fabulist's head, it may naturally be doubted whether the drama at any time approaches the spectator near enough to touch the spring of his emotions. That it does so, here and there, is true, but it is also a fact that generally speaking, we care little what becomes of anybody concerned. The supernatural beings, when not repugnant, are indifferent, the mortals as a rule are more or less contemptible, while upon all rests the dark shadow of an incestuous crime so rare even in the days of myth that Fricka exclaims, urging Wotan to punish Siegmund!—

"Bridal embrace
of brother and sister!
When, where was it known
to mate with the child of your mother!"

Is this story, wherein poetic beauty and ingenious circumstances are allied to childish imaginings, made black by association with a sin, which horrifies even a goddess, and degraded by connection with love that rises in but a single instance above animalism—is this a model for the national music-drama of Germany? Heaven forefend!

This writer too assures us, what we opined before, that "the more eminent among German musicians stayed away; Brahms, Hiller, Volckmann, Joachim, Rubinstein, Raff—none of these put in an appearance. For reasons about which it would be impertinent to speculate."

The *London Spectator* says:

The Wagner Festival at Bayreuth appears to have been a great success. The composer had his own way throughout, his audience included "a pit full of kings," and all the resources of the carpenter and the scene-painter were stretched to the uttermost, with a grand result in effects. Correspondents have described the composer's dramas to all the world, and the festival has been allotted as much space in the journals as the account of a great battle. The only drawback to the festival seems to be its total want of utility. The king of Bavaria enjoyed himself, and Herr Wagner enjoyed himself, and hundreds of musical fanatics are supposed to have enjoyed themselves, but how is Art advanced by a massive ceremonial which it takes months to organize, a world to attend, and kings to pay for? We pronounce no opinion on Herr Wagner's music, but what can the world gain from music which requires for full effect such gigantic accessories? The sculptor who can only carve on mountains may be a great sculptor, but neither the practice nor the understanding of sculpture can be improved by him. Conceding for the moment all that Herr Wagner claims, there is something Oriental, something barbaric, in this way of taking the ears of the world by storm. It is as if a musician illustrated a new conception of the laws of harmony by a miraculously adroit use of steam whistles, gongs and cannon. It is music for Brobdingnagians endowed with immortality, not for poor little ants, with only some 15,000 days of maturity.

THE ART OF MUSIC SAFE! "Shall there be no more cakes and ale because thou art virtuous?" and a "reformed" follower of Wagner? The *London Times* musical correspondent begins his report of the Bayreuth Festival with this consoling paragraph:

Having advanced half-way, we are in possession of tolerably fair grounds for estimating the results, more or less probable, of Richard Wagner's colossal undertaking—we mean with regard to its general influence upon the "art-work of the future." Our own impression, after hearing *Rheingold* and the *Walküre*, is that the art of music, not in its trivial manifestations, which are of small consequence, but as it is understood and practised by the "great masters," stands in no danger from the gods and giants, dwarfs and heaven-descended heroes, that people the scenario of the *Nibelungen Ring*. Opera, in the legitimate acceptance of the term, will rest precisely where it was; and operatic composers worthy the name, to say nothing of "the piping operatic singing birds," who give voice to their melody, can rest in quietude with arms enfolded. In strict truth, the Tetralogy (or Trilogy with *Forsepiel*, "les deux se disent") is no opera at all. It is a play, the speeches in which are declaimed, rather than sung, to orchestral accompaniment; if that may be called accompaniment which has nearly all the business to itself, and to which the development of the melodies, such as they are, is chiefly assigned; if that may be called accompaniment, which, caring nothing for the physical stamina of the stage declaimer, pursues its independent course in all measures and modifications of measures, the tonality ever shifting from key to key, careless of the hitherto recognized laws of modulation, from the pulling aside the curtains even to the pulling to thereof, and after. The fact that the Tetralogy is not opera may bring consolation to many who persist in liking what Herr Wagner styles "that doubtful kind of Entertainment." Opera being safe, it is no less pleasant to be informed, on Wagner's authority, by Mr. Dannreuther, one of the master's zealous apostles, that while "drama" (Wagnerian drama) must in future be "the height of men's musical ambition," the "various beautiful forms of instrumental music now current" will not "cease to be cultivated";—so that the further hearing of symphonies, quartets, sonatas, and trios still lies within the pale of orthodoxy. Fortified by such assurances, a brief survey of what has already been witnessed of this memorable week's proceedings may be entered upon with more equanimity than might otherwise have been the case.

Finally an anecdote, sufficiently Wagnerian. It is related by M. Albert Wolf in *le Figaro*. "The scene occurred during the rehearsals. The first act of the *Walküre* represents an interior; an immense fire blazes on the hearth, and, to render the illusion more complete, M. Wagner asks a machinist to add clouds of smoke, which incommoded the tenor to such a point that, at the last general rehearsal, he said to the master of masters:—'Pardon, is it not possible that you can have the smoke suppressed?'—'Jamais,' replied Wagner; 'as there is no smoke without fire, there is no fire without smoke.'—'But this smoke prevents my singing.'—'You will sing in spite of it; the smoke is necessary to the ensemble of my work of Art!'—'In that case,' said Niemann, 'nothing easier than to arrange the affair: make the chimney sing, and I'll do the smoking!'"

PHILADELPHIA, SEPT. 12. Theodore Thomas, under the auspices of the Ladies' Centennial Committee, is to give a two weeks festival at the Academy of Music here, commencing on the twentieth inst. There will be eight evening performances and two matinées. His soloists are Miss Drasdil, Miss Beebe, Miss Henne, Mr. Whitney, Mr. Remmert, Mr. Bischoff, Mad. Schiller (piano), Miss Brown (piano), Mr. Mills (piano), Mr. Sherwood (piano). The Ladies' Centennial Chorus will assist.

Strakosch is giving opera at the Academy this week, with Palmieri and Bolocca. I am told they had a very large audience last evening.

Mr. J. N. Pattison has been quite ill, but is now at his post of duty. His recitals are largely attended.

Mr. L. E. Levassor has added a vocalist to his morning recitals given daily. Yesterday he had a fine programme:

"Oh Rest in the Lord".....Mendelssohn
Mrs. A. Hunt.
Polonaise in E flat.....Chopin
Scherzo from Sonata, op. 31.....Beethoven
"Waiting".....Miliard
Mrs. A. Hunt.
Rhapsodie Hongroise, No. 3.....Liszt

Mr. Levassor has firmly established himself here as a careful and conscientious pianist, and has made a host of friends and admirers.—Mr. Bialla continues his delightful organ recitals; but they would be much more entertaining to his regular daily auditors, if he would increase his repertoire.—Mr. Coulander has departed.—Miss Julia Rive, whose charming artistic recitals I have before mentioned in my letters, is at her home in Cincinnati, in excellent health. A project is now on foot to effect an engagement with her for a series of recitals to be given either in "Judges" or "Memorial" Hall.—The Kinkel Brothers are also expected to play in "Main" Hall during October, assisted by Levy.
C. H.

Music in Cincinnati.

CINCINNATI, AUG. 30.—As our musical season is about to open, I thought it would be interesting to your readers to know what we intend doing this season in the Western musical metropolis. Mr. Otto Singer has returned from his Eastern trip, and will commence his labors next week. Chief among them will be the drilling of the chorus for the coming Biennial Musical Festival here next May. Mr. Singer has done a great amount of good in this city and suburbs, and I am glad to be able to say that he is appreciated. The city is, as you are doubtless aware, the home of quite a number of fine pianists. I think it will not be claiming too much to say that the first place as a pianist, not only here, but in America rightfully belongs to Miss JULIA RIVE. In this, her native city, her talent and genius was first acknowledged and fostered. Her performances here have always been perfect ovations. Last evening I had the pleasure of hearing her render the following classical programme:

Bach—
Grand Prelude and Fugue in C Minor.
(Well tempered Clavier, No. 2).
Mozart—
Fantasia in C Minor.
Beethoven—
(a) Sonata Pathétique, op. 13.
Grave and Allegro—Adagio cantabile—Rondo.
(b) Allegretto from the 7th Symphony (arranged by Liszt).
Mendelssohn—
Fantasia in F sharp Minor.
Andante—Allegro con moto—Presto.
Schumann—
Two Romances, from op. 28.
Chopin—
(a) Fantasia Brillante in F Minor, op. 49.
(c) Four Mazourkas, op. 17.
(d) Allegro de Concert, op. 46.
Wagner—
Spinning Song from the Flying Dutchman (arranged by Liszt).
Liszt—
(a) Ricordanza.
(b) Rhapsodie Hongroise, No. 10.

Her technique is superb; better, with the exception of Rubinstein's and Von Bülow's, than that of any pianist that has ever been heard here. These two are the only pianists with whom she can be compared; yet do not understand me to say that I do compare her with these

great masters, as being their equals. It would be very unfair to weigh a young girl of twenty-one in the same balance with men of fifty, who have studied, taught, and conducted all the large works of the great masters fifteen years before Miss Rive was born; yet such are the great excellences of her performance, that she has universally, wherever she has appeared, been compared by the critics and the profession to these two great artists, which is really one of the highest compliments that could be paid her. Her accuracy, technique, immense repertoire and memory (she plays entirely without notes) are points which in no other pianist known to me can be compared to Bülow. Her strength, fire and wonderful bravura, on the other hand, unconsciously recall Rubinstein. Miss Rive's technique leaves nothing to be desired, except that perhaps her *trill* (which is astonishingly full and even) might be a little more rapid, especially when she shakes with the third and fourth fingers; her phrasing is above praise; her touch exquisite; the tone she produces broad and firm; her endurance and strength marvellous. Her conception,—ah! now we begin to tread on delicate ground. No artist has ever appeared in this country that has not been unmercifully criticized on this point. Some said Von Bülow could play Beethoven, but he did not comprehend Chopin. Others said that he played Chopin divinely, but was "not the man to grapple Beethoven;" and so on through the list. Almost every critic has some model by which he compares, and on which he bases his judgment, and when they hear an artist depart from their "model" they are "up in arms" in an instant.—My own impression is, that Miss Rive's conception is that of a thorough artist, and no one at her age (certainly no lady) so far as I know, has ever accomplished the work on the piano forte that she has. She will give a series of classical recitals this winter.

HENRY G. ANDRES, one of Miss Rive's earliest teachers, occupies a high position here as a teacher, pianist and organist, excelling on the latter instrument. Cincinnati is largely indebted to Mr. Andres for her many excellent performers, and it is also pleasant to say that he is appreciated. His annual Chamber concerts are always well patronized and highly enjoyed.

MR. ARNIM W. DOEMER, a young pianist recently returned from Europe, has a fine position, and a large class. His recitals last season were artistic and instructive and will be looked for with high anticipations this season.

MR. WERNER STEINBREKER, one of our oldest pianists, still continues teaching, and occasionally gives recitals and chamber concerts. Several will be given this season.

MR. P. LEVANSKY, a very fine pianist and an excellent teacher, will probably join forces with some vocal talent and give three chamber concerts.

MR. CARL PALLATT is an excellent teacher and a fine accompanist. He has not fully made up his mind about his Fall campaign, but in all probability will give one or two soirées.

MR. OTTO SINGER I have already mentioned. If his other duties permit, he will give three Chamber Concerts, assisted by a string quintet from the "Cincinnati Grand Orchestra." Mr. Singer's Chamber concerts heretofore have been the best in that line, that we have had here, and it is to be hoped that he will not be so pressed with other duties that he will be compelled to omit them this season.

SIG. A. C. ALFISI, one of the best vocal teachers in this country, will probably produce the opera of "Martha" with his pupils.

SIG. JANATTA, also one of our leading vocal teachers, who brought out "Martha" with great success last year, is making an effort to produce the "Bohemian Girl" this season.

MADAME PAULINE RIVE, the mother of the gifted pianist, and one of her teachers, will give two concerts with her pupils; they are always enjoyable.

MRS. HANIST KERR, one of our best teachers, will also give two recitals with her pupils.

"The Cincinnati Grand Orchestra" will give five subscription concerts, this being their fifth season. They number fifty instruments, and are under the baton of Mr. Michel Brand, formerly of the Thomas orchestra. Mr. Louis Ballenbergh is the business manager. There has been a great deal of opposition to the management and conductor lately, and strong efforts have been made to break up the organization or to put it in other hands. While there is certainly room for improvement, both in the orchestra and management, it is better than any other city in the Union enjoys outside of New York, and in my judgment, should the present organization be broken up, it will be a long time before we have another equally good. It should be the duty of every music loving citizen to do his utmost to encourage and sustain it.
A. C. D.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC, Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

- Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.
- Gone to the Silent Home. Song and Chorus. Eb. 3. d to E. Prior. 30
"The little feet that long ago
Ran up and down the lane."
Simple and affecting ballad in popular style.
- On Summits of the Other Shore. Song and Chorus. Bb. 3. E to F. Danks. 30
"Her amber hair is shining bright."
One of the prophetic songs, that are always beautiful.
- Wrecked and Saved. Descriptive Song. Bb. 3. g to F. Knowles. 35
"All sails were gone,—the ship a wreck
And downward sinking fast."
Previous "shipwreck" songs have been written that are difficult and highly wrought, but this excels in being easy, sufficiently dramatic, and exciting enough to command the attention of an audience.
- One Hundred Years of Freedom. Quartet and Chorus. F. 3. c to g. Danks. 30
"Peal out, ye bells! Ring joyfully,
And cheer us on our way."
A cheering Centennial Chorus, with good Bass Solo.
- Tom and I. G. 3. c to g. Danks. 30
"We kissed each other, Tom and I
Beneath the linden tree."
Nice little love song.
- Pretty as a Picture. Fine lithograph title. A. 3. E to F. Bishop. 40
"O, my heart is gone, and I'm forlorn.
A darling face has won me."
One of the prettiest of bright faces on the title, and a sparkling, pretty song.
- The Old Journal. C. 3. d to E. Gabriel. 35
"And then I think I hear him sing
From golden gates above."
A serious but beautiful song.

Instrumental.

- Art Building (Memorial Hall) March. C. 2 Stecher. 40
A very musical easy march, with the magnificent "Memorial" pictured on the title.
- Tilden and Hendricks' Grand March. With portrait on the title. D. 2. Mack. 40
Music has no party, and Mr. Mack has done well by all the candidates. Portraits of both Tilden and Hendricks are given.
- Operatic Medley Waltz. 3. Cheney. 75
A very spirited set, founded on popular opera melodies.
- Medley of National Airs. 2. Grobe. 75
Familiar Airs. Magnificent Picture Title.
- Empire Grand March de Bravoure. A. 3. Phelps. 40
A bravoure march, with plenty of crashing chords and octaves, rendering it powerful and brilliant.
- Night in Venice. Gondelled. A. 3. Kolling. 35
An easy, melodious piece, admirable for study.

BOOKS.

The Whippoorwill. A School Song Book by W. O. Perkins. Price 50 cts.

Mr. Perkins' last book: "The Golden Robin" had a large sale, and this one is at least equally good, with an elementary course, a large number of bright new songs such as girls and boys are sure to like, and a few hymn tunes for opening and closing services.

Dictionary of Musical Terms. By J. Stainer and W. A. Barret, of Oxford University, England. Price in boards \$4.00. In cloth \$5.00.

This is a comprehensive work quite worthy of Oxford and of the accomplished compilers, and is rather a succession of valuable treatises than a dictionary. Illustrated with many wood cuts.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked from 1 to 7. The key is denoted by a capital letter, as C, Bb, etc. A large Roman letter marks the lowest and the highest note if on the staff, small Roman letters if below or above the staff. Thus: "C, b, c to E" means "Key of C, Fifth degree, lowest letter, c on the added line below, highest letter, E on the 4th space."

